UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1996/NGO/52
27 March 1996

ENGLISH ONLY

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-second session
Item 10 of the provisional agenda

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Written statement submitted by the International Association of Educators for World Peace, a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[21 March 1996]

Question of the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms

1. Population transfer, characterized by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities as "the movement of people as a consequence of political and/or economic processes in which the State Governments or State-authorized agencies participate", may result, in certain circumstances, in breaches of humanitarian law, human rights and other international law. The migration of large numbers of Chinese citizens into Tibet and the circumstances of such transfer, with evidence from several fieldworkers, Tibetan testimonies and admissions from the Chinese authorities lead to the conclusion that population transfer in Tibet fits the definition above and involves breaches of international law.

2. Furthermore, the act of population transfer in Tibet is also a breach of the right of the Tibetan people to self-determination. There are identifiable breaches of economic, social and cultural rights: the right to work, to education, the principle of non-discrimination, housing rights, cultural integrity and control over natural resources.

3. The policy of mandatory transfer of officials, technical experts and workers to Tibet has been in force since the beginning of the occupation in 1949. Some liberalization took place after 1980, with the training of Tibetan cadres to replace some of the Chinese. In the last two or three years, though, this practice has been abandoned as the authorities push ahead with rapid economic development. More and more Chinese experts are again being sent to Tibet involuntarily to "assist" in development.

4. A speech by Raidi, Deputy Secretary of the so-called "Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR)" Communist Party of China published in "Document 5" an internal document of the "Third National Forum on Work in Tibet" held on 5 September 1994 said: "The Central Committee has divided the tasks and responsibilities among other provinces within [specified] time-limits, to be supported with people from all walks of life as we requested ... This is a new strategy".

5. Recent fieldwork data indicate that the Chinese presence in Tibet is far more extensive than official Chinese statistics suggest. Two patterns of migration have been revealed. In eastern Tibet (Kham and Amdo), the process of the Chinese influx has in some places been one of expansion into Tibetan areas and the appropriation of Tibetan lands for agriculture, along with the introduction of new economic frameworks. In central and western Tibet (U Tsang), the pattern has been one of urbanization, with Chinese towns being created in the middle of a still-Tibetan countryside and the sinicization of Tibetan urban centres. These towns are the focus of current strategies for economic growth, and reflect development for the benefit of Chinese settlers rather than the Tibetan population.

6. In urban centres, the Chinese settlements are, for the most part, engaged in the retail and service trades or unskilled construction work. These settlers are problematic for a number of reasons. A large proportion of them are in Tibet of their own volition and are there without legal registration. It is therefore all but impossible to estimate their number. More perturbing, though, is that their presence is taking work opportunities away from Tibetans. Indeed, economic activities are now so dominated by Chinese settlers that the marginalization of the Tibetan people is in danger of becoming irreversible.

7. Examples of economic domination by Chinese settlers so far noticed and recorded are: the Tromsikhang markets in Lhasa, where a head count of traders revealed 756 Chinese businesses compared to 305 Tibetan ones; and Tsethang, where another survey of businesses, from restaurants to street fruit-sellers, revealed 277 Chinese-owned enterprises to 120 Tibetan ones; in Chabcha country of what is now Qinghai (north-eastern Tibet), the pattern of domination of agricultural land use by Chinese settlers is now well established. A small number of Chinese farmers in the region have been joined by new farm workers, brought into the region when huge State farms were established. The Chinese settlers now control large tracts of land that was once accessible to Tibetan farmers. Around Lhasa, the Tibetan capital, the area of land with Chinese-owned greenhouses and vegetable fields has increased dramatically during the 1990s. An independent survey of vegetable sellers in the Lhasa

markets revealed a total of 677 Chinese to 81 Tibetans. Particularly alarming is the evidence of support for the Chinese farmers around Lhasa from the United Nations development project, WFP 3357.

8. In December 1994, Chen Kuiyuan, secretary of "TAR Communist Party of China" noted: "They should not be afraid that people from the hinterland are taking their money or jobs away. Under a Socialist market economy, Tibet develops its economy and the Tibetan people learn their skills to earn money when a hinterland makes money in Tibet."

9. The present Chinese development policy for Tibet is to improve the infrastructure, invest in industries, encourage township and private enterprises, facilitate Chinese settlements in the form of private business households, integrate the rural population into the Chinese market economy by modernizing and rationalizing agriculture, reclaiming land through construction of irrigation ditches and sedentarizing nomads. Although, in theory, Tibetans could benefit equally from this development, this is rarely the case.

10. The current development strategy in Tibet is integrating the Tibetan economy into that of China. This development strategy is creating opportunities for the increasing numbers of Chinese settlers and placing the Tibetan population under the control of an administration and economy that is biased against them.

11. The current influx of Chinese follows a pattern of colonization through Chinese urbanization of Tibet. Having set up frameworks to exploit Tibet's rich natural resources, the Chinese authorities now seem intent on transforming the country into a Chinese province by focusing current economic development on the growing market towns, which are dominated by Chinese social and economic modes of behaviour.

12. The consequence of the policies of population transfer by the Chinese authorities is to consolidate Chinese control over Tibet through the assimilation of the Tibetan people into the Chinese majority. The current situation seems to indicate an escalation of this control. The continuing and increasing influx of Chinese might well contribute to a worsening of the already strained relations between the Tibetans and the Chinese inside Tibet. A number of demonstrations in the first months of 1995 were directed against Chinese entrepreneurs in Tibet. In this sense, stepping up policies designed to consolidate Chinese control might ultimately prove to be destabilizing.

13. The influx of Chinese settlers is one of the most serious problems facing the survival of Tibet today. The pattern of migration into Tibet has historical parallels with traditional Chinese mechanisms for expansion, although in Tibet the process has been massively accelerated since the Chinese occupation of 1949.

14. In the final analysis, the Chinese policy of population transfer into Tibet not only destroys Tibetan civilization but, in the process, also aims at the extermination of the Tibetan race. When this final stage is reached, there will be no one to question the Chinese hold over Tibet.

15. In conclusion, International Association of Educators for World Peace calls upon the Commission on Human Rights to pay special attention to the situation of human rights in Tibet, and in particular to the ongoing population transfer of Chinese settlers. China should be made accountable for its repeated failure to end policies that have deprived the Tibetan people of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. We also call upon the Commission to adopt a strong resolution on China at this session.